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ABSTRACT

The research audit is an effective means for providing undergraduate students with relevant organizational experience through which they can integrate theory and practice. A course was designed to teach students to apply basic concepts in the field of organizational communication to "real life" communication problems in organizations. The objectives included increasing student knowledge of organizational operation; organizational communication; the identification, analysis, and solution of organizational communication problems; career preparation; and the development of practical research skills. The course used three teaching methods--lecture/discussion, case studies/role plays/group exercises, and the communication audit, and two types of evaluation: an informal assessment based on student comments and a brief questionnaire administered to all students. The communication audit was found to contribute significantly more to student achievement by sending students into places of business and other organizational settings. Before using the audit for classroom use, instructors need to consider a number of issues, including the selection of organizations, grouping students, maintaining a working relationship with the organizations, research methods, and scheduling. A copy of the communication audit survey is appended. (EL)

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BUILDING A CONTEXT OF EXPERIENCE: COMMUNICATION AUDITS TO TEACH COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

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CS 504 929

BUILDING A CONTEXT OF EXPERIENCE: COMMUNICATION AUDITS TO TEACH COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

One of the abiding challenges for teachers of communication is to fit the principles and practices they teach into a context of "real world" experience. Nowhere is this challenge more keen than in the areas of business and organizational communication, where undergraduates rarely have the kinds of relevant experiences they bring to a course in, say, interpersonal or mass communication. Most instructors do what they can to contextualize communication concepts by recounting illustrative personal experiences; by assigning case studies for reading and discussion; or by having students participate in simulations, role plays, and games. But few of these methods succeed in being both engaging and "real".[1]

We would like to outline in this paper an instructional approach which not only succeeds in establishing a context of reality for students, but one which, furthermore, offers experience in using a research tool actually employed by practicing orgarizational analysts and consultants. Specifically, we are recommending the use of a "live" communication audit as a way of providing undergraduates with a relevant organizational experience through which they can intergrate theory and practice. Not only can an audit be of considerable instructional value for students of organizational communication; but in varying forms, it can be a useful adjunct to any course in business communication.

BACKGROUND

The idea of communication auditing is not new; Odiorne discussed it in Personnel Psychology[2] thirty years ago. As communication has become more

widely accepted as a vital organizational function and a central activity of managers, interest has grown for some systematic technique of assessing organizations' "communication health." Over a period of about five years in the early 1970s, the International Communication Association committed substantial resources to the development of a basic communication audit approach.[3] Since then, others have suggested alternate perspectives and procedures to achieve the same end.[4]

However they have been conceived and structured, all forms of the communication audit constitute an attempt to examine in detail the communication processes in an organization. The ICA version, which has been the most thoroughly tested and one of the most widely used in organizational consulting, is a multi-method inquiry that examines the communication philosophy, policies, and practices of an organization. Its primary uses are to monitor and evaluate an organization's communication activities, to identify communication breakdowns and blockages, and to provide information about the communication system that can be used as a basis for organizational development. In addition to showing how communication works in an organization, the audit can also provide a relatively useful picture of the organization's overall communication climate.

For those unfamiliar with the practices and instruments involved in communication auditing the discussion which follows, briefly describes the plan developed under the auspices of the International Communication Association.[5] The ICA communication audit was designed as a standardized system of five instruments. The central measurement tool is a questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisting of demographic items and a set of questions organized around nine areas: 1) the amount of information about central organizational

issues received from others, 2) the amount of information about various matters sent to others, 3) the amount of information received through particular communication channels, 4) the amount of information received from particular sources, 5) the amount of follow-up action resulting from information sent, 6) the amount of feedback received from certain individuals, 7) the quality of information (with respect to timeliness and accuracy) received from particular sources, 8) the nature of certain communication relationships (with respect to trust, encouragement of different opinions, and influence in decision making), and 9) the extent of satisfaction with various organizational outcomes (pay, opportunity, goal achievement, and the like).

The questionnaire is supplemented by interviews, network analysis, descriptions of critical communication incidents, and communication diaries. The interviews are typically conducted one-on-one with the goal of corroborating and clarifying information obtained through other means; however, they also can be a way of discovering communication concerns not picked up by other instruments (see Appendix B for sample interview protocol). Network analysis is carried out by surveying members to determine frequency of contact with other members. These data are then computer analyzed to yield a representation of the organization's functional communication system in terms of who is isolated from others, who links groups, etc. Written descriptions of critical communication incidents are are elicited from members as illustrations of typically successful or unsuccessful instances of communication. These episodes enrich the other data and help to show concretely what kind of communication is occurring and why communication in certain units or circumstances is seen as good or bad. Communication diaries are records of specific communication activities (e.g., telephone calls, memos, meetings) kept by

participants over a one week period. These, too, indicate actual communication behavior.

The communication audit need not, of course, make use of these five particular instruments, and certainly for class use instructors need to select and adapt methods to meet their needs. We will consider the question of what instruments to use later in this paper. Let us for now, however, make two general observations about the communication audit as a teaching tool. First, the audit affords students a highly structured research experience. For undergraduates, who may have no prior experience with anything but library research, this is especially helpful. They are not left to their own devices to design a research project or to conduct research in vague terms. Second, owing to its packaged character, the audit is generally appealing to organizations. It is relatively concrete and seems more easily understood and more readily accepted than just "doing field research." These features enhance the value of the audit as a pedagogical instrument. The remainder of this paper will discuss more specifically the audit's application in teaching.

COURSE DESIGN

To introduce undergraduate students to the basic concepts and theorizes in the field of organizational communication, a course was designed which focused on the application of these concepts and theories to "real life" communication problems in organizations. Our belief was that if students actually had to confront live communication processes and try to explain them, identify problems, and suggest remedies, they would better understand and more truly learn the subject matter of the course and be better prepared

to work in organizations, whatever their academic majors or planned occupations, but particularly if they were headed toward management, public relations, or other "communication-intensive" positions.

There were six primary objectives of the course:

1. To increase students' understanding of how organizations operate.
2. To increase students' awareness and knowledge of communication as it occurs in organizations.
3. To develop students' competencies in identifying and analyzing communication problems in organizations.
4. To develop student's skills and understanding related to solving communication problems in organizations.
5. To contribute significantly to students' career preparation.
6. To develop students' practical research skills.

The course was set up to use three teaching methods:

1. Lecture/discussion,
2. Case studies/role plays/group exercises,
3. Communication audit.

The first half of the semester was devoted to exploring organizational and communication concepts and theories using a combination of lecture/discussion and case studies/role plays/group exercises. Part of our aim in using role plays and group exercises was to get students accustomed to group work in preparation for the rather intensive collaboration that would be required of them later in the course when they became audit research teams. About halfway through the semester the audit was introduced and explained, and the students were trained in the research methods necessary to perform

the audit--in this instance, the administration and analysis of questionnaires and interviews. Having identified local organizations willing to be audited earlier during the course, research teams of about six members each were then formed and each group embarked on its own audit, a project that would occupy about the last six weeks of the semester. The class continued to meet as usual during the period when audits were being conducted, except that one of our three weekly meetings was given over entirely to audit research team meetings and our discussions in other sessions were concerned largely with the problems students were encountering and the discoveries there were making. Throughout the semester, readings were assigned from textbooks and supplemental sources. Students' mastery of organizational communication concepts was tested with three hourly examinations.

RESULTS

To assess the outcomes of the teaching methods used in the course, we conducted two types of evaluation. The first was an informal, impressionistic assessment of student's gains from the course based on comments made by students during the audit phase of the course, on their apparent enthusiasm for and commitment to the work, and on the quality of the audit groups' final written reports. Our biases in favor of our own teaching notwithstanding, these informal measures were encouraging. Students' anonymous open-ended responses in evaluating the audit experience were extremely positive; noting many of the dimensions of the experience we had hoped would be most salient such as its sense of "realness," rigor, and involvement. As for the audit reports, they were accurate and thorough and comparable in content, form, and style to similar reports we have seen prepared by graduate students and

professional consultants. The second form of evaluation was a brief questionnaire administered to all students in the course on the last day of class. Responding anonymously to a set of five point scales (1 = lowest possible rating, 5 = highest possible rating), students rated each of the three main instructional methods--lecture/discussion, case studies/role plays/group exercises, communication audit--as to its value or effectiveness in accomplishing the objectives of the course. The questionnaire, along with mean responses for each item, is presented in Table I. The 31 completed questionnaires were subjected to multiple t-tests (two-tailed) comparing the

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Insert Table 1 Here

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effectiveness or value of the communication audit with the effectiveness or value of each of the other instructional methods in achieving each of the main goals of the course. Findings are summarized below.

1. To what extent did each of the teaching methods increase your understanding of how organizations operate? The communication audit was rated as increasing such understanding to a significantly greater extent than either lecture/discussion ($t = 5.44$, $df = 29$, $p < .001$) or case studies/role plays/group exercises ($t = 9.13$, $df = 29$, $p < .001$).
2. To what extent did each of the teaching methods increase your awareness and knowledge of communication as it occurs in organizations? The communication audit was rated as increasing such knowledge to a significantly greater extent than either lecture/discussion ($t =$

3.29, df = 29, p < .005) or case studies/role plays/group exercises (t = 6.90, df = 29, p < .001).

3. To what extent do you feel you have become more competent in identifying and analyzing communication problems in organizations as a result of each teaching method? The communication audit was rated as increasing such competency to a significantly greater extent than either lecture/discussion (t = 5.11, df = 30, p < .001) of case studies/role plays/ group exercises (t = 9.32, df = 30, p < .001).]

4. How valuable was each of the teaching methods in developing your skills and understanding related to solving real problems in organizational communication? The communication audit was rated as significantly more valuable than either lecture/discussion (t = 5.38, df = 30, p < .001) or case studies/role plays/group exercises (t = 9.99, df = 30, p < .001).

5. To what extent was each type of course experience worthwhile in terms of your career prepartion? The communication audit was rated as significantly more worthwhile than either lecture/discussion (t = 3.80, df = 30, p < .001) or case studies/role plays/group exercises (t = 5.52, df = 30, p < .001).

In addition to asking students to rate the effectiveness or value of each instructional method, the questionnaire attempted to assess the degree to which the activities related to the communication audit helped to develop students' practical research skills. These findings are reported in Table II.

Insert Table II Here

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

From these results, the communication audit appears to have been, from the students' standpoint, an appealing and effective instructional tool. It contributed significantly more to students' achievement of the overall course objectives than any other teaching method, particularly those objectives related to developing skills and competencies in identifying, analyzing, and solving communication problems. It is quite clear, too, that sending students into places of business and other organizational settings to ask questions and observe helped students improve basic research skills and understand fundamental concepts far better than they would have had they been confined to classroom discussion and exercises.

Besides accomplishing the specific objectives of the course, we believe the audit activities can produce beneficial "side effects" in a number of ways. First, conducting the audit demands that students plan and coordinate their efforts, make some important decisions as a group, and behave in a professional manner. They are, after all, responsible for maintaining a consultant-client relationship with an organization. Second, the audit activities not only provide experience in research techniques and data analysis but also put into students' hands information that is very much alive and in which people other than themselves have a considerable stake. Good judgment is as important as communication knowledge. Finally, each student audit group must prepare a professional quality written report of its activities and findings, which not only completes the class project but is presented to the client organization. Each audit group, furthermore, has the option to follow up the written report with an oral "debriefing" session for its client organization. These experiences make wonderful resume material and might,

for a rare student, even lead directly to an internship or employment with a client organization.

Another hoped-for outcome of using the communication audit as a teaching method is what we might call "radiating effects." Since students must carry out their studies in real local organizations, the audit can be a way for the college or university to serve the local business community, a "contact point" that benefits both parties. Careful preparation of students before they take on the audit and close monitoring of their progress can ensure that a responsible study is carried out, one that can tell the working manager important things about his or her organization. The final report which is delivered to the organization should, among other things, greatly help the organization to identify communication problems and take steps toward their resolution. Because communication auditing has considerable appeal for businesses and other organizations, word of students' good work will very likely move rapidly through the community, increasing the visibility of the sponsoring department and enhancing support for its programs. One small but important payoff might simply be requests for more audits, but other kinds of cooperative arrangements are also likely to result.

USING THE COMMUNICATION AUDIT

It seems important to note some of the issues that instructors need to consider before making the communication audit a part of their courses. These matters include identifying organizations to audit--whether to be done by students or by instructor; grouping students and matching them with client organizations--whether through self selection, random assignment, or some combination; establishing and maintaining a working relationship with the

client organizations--whether the instructor should intervene and how much; determining what research methods to use--questionnaire, interview, critical incident, diary, participant observation; and scheduling--where to place the audit in the course and how much time to spend doing it.

We would like to consider each of these concerns in turn. The first issues--identifying organizations to audit, forming student audit groups and matching them with client organizations, and establishing and maintaining working relationships with client organizations--we will discuss briefly together. We have tried different approaches for making these initial arrangements and believe that any instructor ought to choose the methods that seem most sensible and workable considering the organizations available on campus and in the community and the sort of students with whom one is working. We recently have had very good luck with students identifying organizations to audit. We asked them to give us the name of an organization which they believe might cooperate with our class, usually because either they are or have been members or they know someone who is a member. From a list of a dozen or so student suggestions it is probably possible to draw four to six appropriate, willing organizations. For an organization to be "appropriate" we look for 20-40 members and at least two levels of authority or responsibility. Once a sufficient number of suitable organizations are identified, student groups can be formed and matched to organizations by whatever means are acceptable to the students and will satisfy the instructor's interest in having cooperative, responsible research teams. We have managed this quite smoothly by asking students to give us, in rank order, their first three choices of organizations to audit; then we group students on the basis of

their ranked preferences. As for establishing and maintaining the client-consultant relationship, we like to make a follow up call to the organization after a student has been given its approval to conduct the audit. From that point on, however, we leave the relationship in the hands of the student audit groups. Before they make any contact past the first inquiry as to whether the organization might permit an audit, students are made fully aware of what the organization's concerns are likely to be (e.g., confidentiality), what their responsibilities to the organization are, and overall what kind of behavior is expected fo them in their work with the organization. We believe our students have demonstrated a good degree of maturity, responsibility, and professionalism in this endeavor, and our cooperating organizations for the most part have concurred.

As to the matter of research methods, we are committed to the notion of triangulation[6] and believe that, if the communication audit is to achieve the two goals of providing an accurate account of communication in an organization and of giving undergraduate students sound early training in research, multiple methods are required. Our choices of instruments have been questionnaires and interviews because they are reasonably reliable, produce a good data base, and are manageable in the time available during the course. Administering the questionnaires--which are adaptations of the ICA Communication Audit Survey[7] and Litwin and Stringer's climate questionnaire[8] --requires little training, so attention can be focused on training for interviewing and for coding and analysis of the questionnaire data.

Other data gathering techniques are, of course, available and have value in auditing organizational communication. However, we believe they present problems that make them ill-suited for use in the audits performed as class

projects. Communication diaries are problematic in that they require more time and effort than many subjects are willing to invest, and student researchers need to be trained in content analysis and the use of involved coding schemes. Descriptions of critical communication incidents or episodes may be solicited as part of a questionnaire, but our experience suggests that asking for just two or three makes the questionnaire unduly long, and response rate tends to be low. Respondents either skip them entirely or provide the first and skip the others. Participant observation is an excellent method for gathering audit information but has the drawbacks of requiring enormous amounts of time in the field setting and of requiring extensive training in observing, recording, and analyzing behavior specimens. While all of these research methods have the potential to provide rich and useful information, interviewing can provide much of the same information and works better within the time constraints of the course.

In sampling subjects, our approach has been to administer the questionnaires to all members of the organization or portion thereof being audited and to interview enough members so that everybody on the audit team participates in two or three interviews. Selection of interviewees may be done randomly, on the basis of members' status as "key" or especially well informed member, or in such a way as to capture a sense of the organization's authority strata or member demographics.

With respect to the issue of scheduling, it is obvious that a period of preparation is necessary before students can intelligently carry out the audit. We believe this preparation should include not only familiarizing students with the audit itself but also building a solid foundation of organization and communication theory and concepts. For us, that has occupied

approximately the first half of a semester. It is conceivable that the audit could be carried out earlier in a semester and used as the base of experience and data in which to ground understandings about organizational communication developed through the audit process. To a considerable extent, the audit serves this "grounding" function even when it is conducted later in the course; this is part of its beauty as an instructional tool. But approached without first having a sound set of concepts, the audit risks being less well focused and coherent, and it becomes less an exercise in helping an organization than a self-serving fact finding mission.

Conducting the audit requires about six weeks, not including making initial contacts and making arrangements for the delivery, distribution, and collection of survey instruments. Client organizations ought to be encouraged to complete questionnaires within the first week. During that first week, members of the audit research team should set up interviews which will be conducted over the next two weeks. While interviewing is going on, the group can be collecting lingering questionnaires and receiving training in coding and analysis of the survey data.

By the fourth week, assuming the data collection is nearly completed, the audit group ought to prepare brief--perhaps three to five pages--preliminary reports describing their activities and findings to date with little interpretation as to the meanings of what has been observed. We suggest the following general outline for the preliminary report:

I. Context of audit--dates, times, settings for data collection.

II. Number of instruments distributed, response rates.

III. Number of interviews, how subjects were selected.

IV. Findings--mean responses for all questionnaire items, themes running through interviews.

The preliminary report is written as if it were a professional progress report for the organization. In fact, it does not go to the organization and students know this. But it is very valuable, we think, partly because it is the sort of thing they might be expected to do if they were acting as paid consultants but more because it serves as an interim point at which the audit group reviews the context of its work and the "facts" it has produced and practices reporting these things in writing. While these reports carry relatively little grade weight in our course, we do critique them in detail, part of our aim being to leave the students with no doubts as to the quality expected in their final reports.

The final stage of the work involves interpreting the findings of the questionnaires and interviews and developing a final report. Because audit groups need to meet quite a number of hours to settle on strengths and weaknesses of the organizational communication system under study, to formulate recommendations for the organization, and to write and rewrite the final report, we allow two weeks for this final phase of the audit. Even so, groups generally feel quite pressured at this point. As instructors, we work closely with individual audit groups during this period, often meeting with them outside of class time to work through this critical and difficult interpretation stage.

Of course, this six week time frame is flexible, but we believe six weeks is probably the minimum time in which anyone should attempt to conduct communication audits as part of the instructional methodology for a one semester course. The importance of the project to the client organization and its values for both the client and the student auditors demand that it not be rushed or cut short.

There is no question that the communicat on audit is a demanding project for both students and teachers. But the rewards are many, and it promises to be one of the best means we have of integrating theory and practice and of building that valuable context of experience.

TABLE I

Mean Responses to Survey

of Perceived Effectiveness of

Different Instructional Methods

in Achieving Course Objectives

	$\bar{X}$*
1. To what extent did each of the following increase your understanding of how organizations operate:	
Class lectures/discussion	3.20
Case study/role plays/groups exercises	3.10
Communication audit	4.60
2. To what extent did each of the following increase your awareness and knowledge of communication as it occurs in organizations?	
Class lectures/discussion	4.17
Case study/role plays/group exercises	3.50
Communication audit	4.63
3. To what extent do you feel you have become more competent in identifying and analyzing communication problems in organizations as a result of:	
Class discussions/lectures	4.26
Case studies/role/group exercises	3.45
Communication audit	4.87
4. How valuable was each of the following in developing your skills and understanding related to solving real problems in organizational communication?	
Class discussions/lectures	4.16
Case studies/role plays/group exercises	3.36
Communication audit	4.71
5. To what extent was each of the following worthwhile in terms of your career:	
Class lectures/discussions	3.84
Case study/role plays/group exercises	3.42
Communication audit	4.52

*Five point scale [1 = lowest possible rating (not at all), 5 = highest possible rating (a great deal)]

TABLE II

Student Perceptions of Helpfulness

of Audit Activities in Developing

Practical Research Skills

Research Skills:	$\bar{X}$*
Set up a research project	4.13
Carry out research in organizations	4.37
Conduct a research interview	4.43
Analyze data	3.90
Diagnose communication problems	4.60
Prepare a report of findings and recommendations	4.34

*Five point scale (1 = not at all helpful, 5 = extremely helpful)

Notes

[1] The following two articles offer excellent critiques and recommendations for making instruction more engaging - Don W. Stacks and John J. Chalfa, Jr., "The Undergraduate Research Team: An Applied Approach to Communication Education," Communication Education, 30 (April 1981), 180-183, and Denise R. Mier, "From Concepts to Practices: Student Case Study Work in Organizational Communication," Communication Education, 31 (April 1982), 151-154.

[2] G. Odiorne, "An Application of the Communication Audit," Personnel Psychology, 7 (1954), 235-243.

[3] Gerald M. Goldhaber and Donald P. Rogers, Auditing Organizational Communication Systems: The ICA Communication Audit (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1979), p. v-vi.

[4] For example, see Howard H. Greenbaum's conceptual structure and Osmo Wiio's LTT Communication Audit in Goldhaber's, Organizational Communication, 3rd ed.. (Dubuque, IA: W. C. Brown Co., 1983) Chapter 10.

[5] In 1979 the ICA audit ceased to exist as an official ICA-sponsored activity. All instruments and procedures are in the public domain.

[6] One of the best arguments for triangulation of methodologies is given by Norman K. Denzin in The Research Act, 2nd ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978), Chapter 10.

[7] See Goldhaber and Rogers.

[8] See George H. Litwin and Robert A. Stringer, Jr., Motivation and Organizational Climate, (Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1968).

APPENDIX A

COMMUNICATION AUDIT SURVEY

Instructions

Please answer all questions since each is important for possibly improving the operation of the organization. If there are any questions which did not apply to you, leave them blank. We appreciate your patience with this important survey.

PLEASE MARK ONLY ONE RESPONSE TO EACH QUESTION

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Receiving Information From Others

You can receive information about various topics in your organization. For each topic listed on the following pages, mark your response on the answer sheet that best indicates: (1) the amount of information you are receiving on that topic and (2) the amount of information you need to receive on that topic, that is, the amount you have to have in order to do your job.

TOPIC AREA	This is the amount of information I receive now						This is the amount of information I need to receive					
		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
How well I am doing in my job	1.	1	2	3	4	5	2.	1	2	3	4	5
Organizational policies and procedures	3.	1	2	3	4	5	4.	1	2	3	4	5
Pay and benefits	5.	1	2	3	4	5	6.	1	2	3	4	5
Activities of other units/departments within the organization	7.	1	2	3	4	5	8.	1	2	3	4	5
How organizational decisions are made that affect my job	9.	1	2	3	4	5	10.	1	2	3	4	5
Promotion and advancement opportunities in the organization	11.	1	2	3	4	5	12.	1	2	3	4	5

Sending Information to Others

In addition to receiving information, there are many topics on which you can send information to others. For each topic listed on the following pages, mark your response on the answer sheet that best indicates: (1) the amount of information you are sending and (2) the amount of information you need to send on that topic in order to do your job.

TOPIC AREA	This is the amount of information I send now						This is the amount of information I need to send					
		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Reporting what I am doing in my job	13.	1	2	3	4	5	14.	1	2	3	4	5
Requesting information necessary to do my job	15.	1	2	3	4	5	16.	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluating the performance of my immediate supervisor	17.	1	2	3	4	5	18.	1	2	3	4	5
Sending information to others in the organization about what my unit/department does	19.	1	2	3	4	5	20.	1	2	3	4	5

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Channels of Communication

The following questions list a variety of channels through which information is transmitted to employees. Please mark your response on the answer sheet which best indicates: (1) the amount of information you are receiving through that channel and (2) the amount of information you need to receive through that channel.

CHANNEL	This is the amount of information I receive now: Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great	This is the amount of information I need to receive: Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Face-to-face contact between two people	21. 1	2	3	4	5	22. 1	2	3	4	5
Face-to-face contact among more than two people	23. 1	2	3	4	5	24. 1	2	3	4	5
Telephone	25. 1	2	3	4	5	26. 1	2	3	4	5
Written (memos, letters)	27. 1	2	3	4	5	28. 1	2	3	4	5
Bulletin Boards	29. 1	2	3	4	5	30. 1	2	3	4	5
Internal Publications (newsletter, magazine)	31. 1	2	3	4	5	32. 1	2	3	4	5

Sources of Information

You not only receive various kinds of information, but can receive such information from various sources within the organization. For each source listed below, mark your response on the answer sheet that best indicates: (1) the amount of information you are receiving from that source and (2) the amount of information you need to receive from that source in order to do your job.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION	This is the amount of information I receive now: Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great	This is the amount of information I need to receive: Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Subordinates (if applicable)	33. 1	2	3	4	5	34. 1	2	3	4	5
Co-workers in my own unit/department	35. 1	2	3	4	5	36. 1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	37. 1	2	3	4	5	38. 1	2	3	4	5
Unit/department meetings	39. 1	2	3	4	5	40. 1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	41. 1	2	3	4	5	42. 1	2	3	4	5
Top Management	43. 1	2	3	4	5	44. 1	2	3	4	5
The "grapevine"	45. 1	2	3	4	5	46. 1	2	3	4	5

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Follow-up on Information Sent

Indicate the amount of action or follow-up that is and needs to be taken on information you send to the following:

TOPIC AREA	This is the amount of follow-up now						This is the amount of follow-up needed					
		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Subordinates (if applicable)	47.	1	2	3	4	5	48.	1	2	3	4	5
Co-workers within your unit/department	49.	1	2	3	4	5	50.	1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	51.	1	2	3	4	5	52.	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	53.	1	2	3	4	5	54.	1	2	3	4	5
Top Management	55.	1	2	3	4	5	56.	1	2	3	4	5

Feedback Received From Key Sources

Indicate the extent to which you currently receive and need to receive suggestions, recommendations, and/or advice from key sources regarding your performance and activities in the organization.

	This is the amount of feedback I receive now						This is the amount of feedback I need to receive					
		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Subordinates (if applicable)	57.	1	2	3	4	5	58.	1	2	3	4	5
Co-workers within your unit/department	59.	1	2	3	4	5	60.	1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	61.	1	2	3	4	5	62.	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	63.	1	2	3	4	5	64.	1	2	3	4	5
Top Management	65.	1	2	3	4	5	66.	1	2	3	4	5

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Quality of Information Received from Key Sources

Timeliness

Indicate the extent to which information from the following sources is usually timely (you get information when you need it--not too early, not too late).

		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Subordinates (if applicable)	67.	1	2	3	4	5
Co-workers within your unit/department	68.	1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	69.	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	70.	1	2	3	4	5
Top-Management	71.	1	2	3	4	5
"Grapevine"	72.	1	2	3	4	5

Accuracy

Indicate the extent to which information from the following sources if usually accurate (you get information that is correct and sufficiently detailed).

		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Subordinates (if applicable)	73.	1	2	3	4	5
Co-workers within your unit/department	74.	1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	75.	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	76.	1	2	3	4	5
Top-Management	77.	1	2	3	4	5
"Grapevine"	78.	1	2	3	4	5

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Communication Relationships

A variety of communicative relationships exists in organizations like your own. Employees exchange messages regularly with management, subordinates, co-workers, etc. Considering your relationships with others in the organization please mark your response on the answer sheet which best describes the relationship in question.

To What extent do you trust:		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Subordinates (if applicable)	79.	1	2	3	4	5
Co-workers within your unit/department	80.	1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	81.	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	82.	1	2	3	4	5
Top-Management	83.	1	2	3	4	5

To what extent are differences of opinions encouraged by:		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Co-workers within your unit/department	84.	1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	85.	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	86.	1	2	3	4	5
Top-Management	87.	1	2	3	4	5

To what extent do you have influence in decisions made by:		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
Co-workers within your unit/department	88.	1	2	3	4	5
Immediate supervisor (if applicable)	89.	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-Management	90.	1	2	3	4	5
Top-Management	91.	1	2	3	4	5

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Institutional Outcomes

One of the most important "outcomes" of working in an organizatio.. is the satisfaction one receives or fails to receive through working there. Such "satisfaction" can relate to the job, one's co-workers, supervisor, or the organization as a whole. Please mark your response on the answer sheet which best indicates the extent to which you are satisfied with:

Outcome:		Very Little	Little	Some	Great	Very Great
My job	92.	1	2	3	4	5
My pay	93.	1	2	3	4	5
My progress in the organization up to this point in time	94.	1	2	3	4	5
My chances for getting ahead in this organization	95.	1	2	3	4	5
My opportunity to "make a difference," to contribute to the overall success of the organization	96.	1	2	3	4	5
The organization's system for recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance	97.	1	2	3	4	5
The organization's concern for its members' welfare	98.	1	2	3	4	5
The organization's overall communicative efforts	99.	1	2	3	4	5
Working in the organization	100.	1	2	3	4	5
The organization as compared to other such organizations	101.	1	2	3	4	5
The organizations overall efficiency of operation	102.	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of the organization's programs and services	103.	1	2	3	4	5
The organization's achievement of its goals and objectives	104.	1	2	3	4	5

Background Information

This section is for statistical purposes only and will be used to study how different groups of people view the organization.

105. How do you receive most of your income from this organization?

1. Salaried
2. Hourly
3. Other

106. What is your sex?

1. Male
2. Female

107. Do you work:

1. Full-time
2. Part-time
3. Temporary Full-time
4. Temporary Part-time

108. How long have you worked in the organization?

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 5 years
3. 6 to 10 years
4. 11 to 15 years
5. More than 15 years

109. What is your position in this organization?

1. I do not supervise anybody
2. First line supervisor
3. Mid-Management
4. Top Management
5. Other (please specify: _____)

110. How much training to improve your communication skills have you had?

1. No training at all
2. Little training
3. Some training
4. Extensive training

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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(The interview should be about 45-50 minutes in length. As a non-scheduled standardized interview it will include some of the same questions for each interviewee, but these will be followed by probes aimed at getting the particular interviewee's perspective. In general, three central areas need to be covered: 1) perceptions of the institution's communication system, 2) perceptions of the organization's climate, and 3) individuals' behavioral and affective responses to the organization's communication system and climate.)

I. Please descirbe your role in the organization. What kinds of information do you need to perform your role? Can you give an example? From whom or where should this information come? Any other people or places?

II. What kinds of information do you now receive? From where or whom? Mainly in what form?

III. What do you feel are the communication <u>strengths</u> of this organization? Please be as specific as possible. What about the strengths of your unit.?

IV What do you feel are the communication <u>weaknesses</u> of this organization? Again, please be as specific as possible. How about your unit?

V. Talk to me about the <u>formal</u> channels through which you receive information about the organization. What kinds of information do you receive through formal channels? How often? Most typically from whom? Can yougive me a couple of examples?

VI. Now talk to me about the <u>informal</u> channels through which you receive information? What kinds of information? How often? From whom?

VII. What kinds of distinctions do you make between formal and informal communication or between formal and informal communication channels?

VIII. We've asked you to talk about a lot of details. Now we'd like you to think in amore general way about this organization. Suppose a friend of yours were considering coming to work heres. (S)He's read the job description and has been given the facts that are generally available. As an insider, what else could you tell him or her to give an accurate general impression of what it's like to work here? What would you say about the atmosphere of the place? Feel free to take some time to think about that.

A. How would you describe relationships here?

B. How are people treated?

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C. How would you describe the decision making processes?

D. What is it like here in terms of formality, supportiveness, receptiveness to different views, etc.

IX. What would you like to see done to improve communication in the organization? Any recommendations?